

BLAZING trigger

A Tongue-in-Cheek Anime Role-Playing Game by Dagda

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Blazing Trigger is a tongue-in-cheek role-playing game in which you play as characters in an anime - not people in an anime-style setting, but actual fictional characters in a television show. This means that the world they are in operates according to the laws of dramatic storytelling rather than logic. In other words, “million-to-one chances crop up nine times out of ten.”

The person running the game is known as the Director. One way to interpret this is that the players are characters in the Director’s imagination who have become a little too well-realized. With a set of motivations and desires that shrug off outside attempts at revision, they pursue their own course even when doing so threatens to disrupt both the planned plotline and the Director’s sanity (which clearly is not doing too well to begin with.)

From a metagame view, **Blazing Trigger’s** focus is rules-light fantastic action, with a large emphasis on character role-playing and cool player-narrated stunts. The goal is a game where you can laugh at how crazy the over-the-top events are, while still cheering because the over-the-top nature of what is happening does not make it any less *awesome*.

PLAY STRUCTURE

Games in **Blazing Trigger** are divided into Episodes. By default, each Episode equals one session of play. Episodes are further divided into Scenes. New Scenes usually begin when there is a significant change in setting and/or location. Each Scene can contain one or more Challenges which the characters must overcome. These sequences may be anything from explosion-filled battles to an attempt to sneak into the girls’ locker room.

With each new Episode, the scale increases further, with the eighth Episode reaching the climax of the action. Think of a standard 26-episode season of an anime as the equivalent of eight Episodes of **Blazing Trigger**. Directors who want to run a more sustainable game can treat new Episodes as other games treat new character levels, gained after reaching new story milestones or completing a certain number of Challenges.

CREATING A CHARACTER

CARDS

Characters in *Blazing Trigger* begin by choosing two cards – one from the Archetype deck and one from the Role deck. Archetypes determine the type of personality characters are rewarded for role-playing, while Roles provide benefits to actions which reinforce a particular relationship to others in the group. Characters may only change these cards at the approval of the Director if there is a corresponding change in the character.

Archetypes:

- Antisocial: The character is incapable of interacting with others in a normal fashion.
- Brainy: The character is knowledgeable on subjects everyone else has never heard of.
- Cold-Blooded: The character is cold, emotionless, and unnerving to others.
- Crass: The character is heedless of social decorum and proper conduct.
- Hot-Blooded: The character is rash, reckless, and enthusiastic.
- Idealistic: The character is determined to interpret whatever happens in a particular way.
- Laid Back: The character is relaxed and easygoing, even in the face of defeat.
- Psychotic: The character is demented and possibly dangerous to about anyone.
- Scheming: The character is prone to making complex plots and manipulating others.
- Uncertain: The character is prone to self-doubt and introspection.

Roles:

- Caretaker: A character whose actions benefit other members of the group.
- Lone Wolf: A character whose actions are done on his own, without any help.
- Mentor: A character who benefits a group member who uses one of his or her traits.
- Renegade: A character whose actions are in defiance of authority figures.
- Rival: A character whose actions counter similar actions from his or her opponent.
- Rookie: A character who learns from a more proficient group member.
- Servant: A character whose actions are ordered to him or her from another.
- Specialist: A character whose actions focus on a specific trait
- Strategist: A character whose actions are planned prior to a Challenge.
- Veteran: A character whose actions are honed to perfection.

SCORES

Characters have three scores which reflect their odds of succeeding Challenges. These scores also improve over time, starting low at Episode One and getting larger by Episode Eight.

Heat:

Heat represents a character's positive attributes, including but not limited to honor, strength, confidence, skill, and style. It also represents the odds of a character succeeding a Challenge which hinges on such qualities.

A character's Heat starts at 1 point and can never exceed the current Episode number.

Power:

Power represents a character's end performance of using special abilities. The interpretation of Power can change from setting to setting: mecha abilities for giant robots, magic for wizardry, ki for martial arts, so forth and so on.

A character's Power begins at 2 points and can never exceed the current Episode number plus one.

Traits:

A character's trait scores represent whatever aspects are relevant to him or her as to how they overcome obstacles. They are the character's skills, equipment, personality, desires, habits, quirks, flaws, so forth and so on. Characters begin with 10 points to place in whichever traits they can come up with. These points can all be used during character creation, or be saved until later to represent a character's growth (with the Director's permission, of course.)

Each trait's score can never exceed the current Episode number.

STATUS

Characters maintain three attributes which represent their general well-being throughout the course of play.

Plot Armor:

Plot Armor represents the character's ability to shrug off an otherwise embarrassing setback and continue on without being compromised of their traits. Once out of Plot Armor, further damage to the character's credibility affects their traits directly. In turn, once a character is entirely out of traits, they are essentially helpless until he or she regains Plot Armor.

A character's Plot Armor starts at 3 points and can never exceed three plus half of the current Episode number, rounding down. Plot Armor is restored by 1 point per successful Challenge and Scene.

Tension:

Tension represents the character's presence in a Challenge. As a character performs exciting and inventive actions related to his or her Archetype, his or her Tension increases at the discretion of

the Director. Tension can then be used to increase the character's chances of succeeding a Challenge at whim.

A character's Tension starts at 0 points and can never exceed twice his or her Heat score. Tension can be earned through sufficient role-play of the character's Archetype.

Fan Base:

Fan Base represents the character's popularity with his or her audience. Fan Base is earned with exceptionally successful Challenges which are charged with excitement. Fan Base allows a character to earn *deus ex machina* moments from the Director when in an otherwise hopeless situation.

A character's Fan Base starts at 1 point and can never exceed the current Episode number. Excess Fan Base earned can be put into a trait of the character's choice for later use.

PLAYING THE GAME

Blazing Trigger uses a roll-under system for performing actions. One die is rolled for each of the three scores: Heat, Power, and a trait related to the attempted action. A roll succeeds when the result is equal or less to the trait score associated with the action.

A character only needs one success to perform an action. However, multiple successes make the action all the sweeter. A double success has the character succeeding in a spectacular way, making the audience go “wow!” A triple success however, has the character unquestionably asserting his or her authority upon the task at hand.

Rolls alone will not suffice though: the character must *describe* the action in detail, regardless of success or failure. Based on the narration, the character may get help from the Director. It may backfire however, if the narration goes out of hand, possibly resulting in a veto by the Director.

Reflecting the frantic, fantastic action of the game, all players roll their dice at the same time, instead of in turns like most games. This style of play encourages more of a group dynamic and dynamic narration rather than something akin to “hitting the goblin for four points of damage.”

CHALLENGES

Challenges are defined as a series of goals that a character must work at to achieve through multiple actions. These goals can range from fending off bandits to sneaking into the villain’s headquarters, from catching the eye of a love interest to convincing the commander that the lieutenant is a traitor.

CONDITIONS

Each goal is achieved through gaining a number of successes as assigned by the Director. The Director may also assign failure conditions for

each goal, which may cause either complete failure or increased difficulty for the rest of the Challenge. Such conditions may include a time limit, a limit of failed attempts, success by the opponents, so forth and so on.

Bear in mind that the Director is not required to reveal any of the success or failure conditions to the characters, as well as the progress of the current goal in the Challenge.

OPPOSING ROLLS

Most of the Director’s characters will not be on the same level as the players’ characters. A mob of easily-defeated amateurs may be a goal as easy as only achieving a number of successes. Major villains on the other hand, may take an entire Episode to take down.

Any party of importance opposing a character has the capability of rolling dice to achieve their own actions, depending on the party’s importance. Minor opponents may only be able to use a handful of trait scores, while major opponents may even have a Heat score to go up against.

When engaging in these opposed rolls, successes of the same type (Power versus Power, for instance,) they cancel out. In terms of success priority, a Heat success trumps a Power success, which in turn trumps a trait success.

In situations where there are opposing groups of characters, or in a case where one character is against a group, each party is represented by one set of rolls, as if it is a one-on-one affair. The results affect groups as a whole, rather than performing rolls for each member of the group.

CHARACTER MAINTENANCE

Using Plot Armor:

When an opposed roll is aimed at hurting the character, an opponent success depletes a point of his or her Plot Armor. If the character is out of Plot Armor, the damage goes to a trait point of the character's choice. Once there are no more trait points to take away, the character becomes useless until he or she gains Plot Armor again after a successful Challenge or Scene.

Opponent successes, while not always aimed at a character's Plot Armor, may also lend to a failure condition or simply subtracted from the character's own success in the Challenge, all at the discretion of the Director.

Using Tension:

Generally, a character earns a point of Tension after a Scene whenever the Director is satisfied that he or she played out his or her chosen Archetype throughout the Scene. However, there are opportunities in which characters can gain extra Tension during a Challenge by choosing not to roll during a round and rather acting out the character's Archetype. An example would be a character with the Hot-Blooded Archetype making an inspirational speech to the group before facing their arch-rival.

Gaining Tension is important, as spending it allows a character to add extra dice to a roll of their choice: each point of Tension grants one extra die of the character's choice. Bear in mind however, that a triple success is still the maximum result of any roll, even if there are technically more than three successes after the use of Tension.

Using Fan Base:

Other than extravagantly succeeding actions, a triple success (and its comparable explanation) is also useful in that it gains a character a point of Fan Base. Even better is that if the character gains excess Fan Base, it can be added to any of the character's traits as he or she chooses.

Fan Base is also important because it helps ward off the really nasty failures a group may wind up making during a Challenge. At the cost of one point of Fan Base per character, the Director may choose to provide a moment of intervention to let the group off the hook. If a character in the group doesn't have any Fan Base during such a moment, he or she is subject to the full brunt of the misfortune.

RUNNING THE GAME

SCALE

As mentioned earlier, the scale of the action increases throughout the Episodes during a game of **Blazing Trigger**. This increase in scale is represented in two ways.

First of all, the size of the dice used increases for the characters the further into the game they get. The dice start at a four-sided die (d4) and ends at a twelve-sided die (d12.) The dice increase is as follows:

Dice Size	Episodes
d4	1
d6	2 and 3
d8	4 and 5
d10	6 and 7
d12	8

Secondly, the dynamic of opponents change as well: opponents do not see an increase of their scores. For the earlier opponents, this makes it much harder to achieve success with larger dice. For the major ones, their high invincibility in the early stages opens up to the characters having a fighting chance as they approach the major opponents' level.

CHALLENGES

Challenges in **Blazing Trigger** are almost entirely up to the Director to describe in terms of difficulty and success and failure conditions. However, here is a guideline that the Director can use to help gauge what is necessary for a Challenge.

For an average difficulty Challenge without an enemy to defeat as a goal (there may still be opponents, but not necessarily a goal in the Challenge to defeat them,) the necessary amount of successes can be calculated as follows:

$$(Episode\ number + 3) \cdot number\ of\ characters$$

For every Challenge of average difficulty that has an added goal of defeating an opponent, remove the number of required opponents and groups of opponents from the number of characters before multiplying. This will become the requisite for *each* goal, be it the main goal or defeating opponents along the way:

$$(Episode\ number + 3) \cdot (number\ of\ characters - number\ of\ opponents\ and\ groups)$$

There are several methods for increasing the difficulty of a challenge. Opponents can have scores and statuses with more points than the characters. There can be higher success requirements for completing the Challenge.

Alternate dice rules can be used as well. Single successes for an opponent can count toward a character losing a Challenge. Double opponent successes can cost a point of the character's Tension. Triple opponent successes can cost a character a point of Plot Armor automatically. Losing a Challenge altogether can also cost Plot Armor if the stakes are high enough according to the Director.

The inverse can be done for decreasing the difficulty of a challenge as well.

ADVANCEMENT

Character advancement in **Blazing Trigger** is simple. The rewards are given after each Episode:

- 1 additional point of Heat
- 1 additional point of Power
- Additional trait points equal to the next Episode number plus 5; these can be used all at once, or during the Episode, like in character creation